

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

AGR-20 AID-20 CEA-02 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 CIEP-02

STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /168 W

----- 094661

R 151740Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6862

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 11668

PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, PFOR, GW, FR

SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO CHIRAC ARTICLE IN LE POINT

REF: PARIS 21850 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: OFFICIAL CIRCLES IN BONN ARE ANNOYED OVER THE RECENT LE POINT INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH AGRICULTURE MINISTER CHIRAC WHO CHARGED THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT WITH ADOPTING AN OFFICIAL POSITION OF MOVING AWAY FROM EUROPE (REFTEL). IN PUBLIC, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS
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TAKING A FAIRLY RESTRAINED, IF SLIGHTLY ACID, LINE

BUT HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE FRENCH FONOFF TO EXPRESS ASTONISHMENT AT THE ARTICLE AND TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION. THE GERMAN PRESS HAS PLAYED THE ISSUE IN HIGH KEY, WITH THE SPRINGER PRESS TAKING THE LINE OF TELLING THE FRENCH "WE TOLD YOU SO" AND WITH OTHER MORE THOUGHTFUL GERMAN NEWSPAPERS COMMENTING ON THE DEEPER FRG-FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY DIFFERENCES WHICH GO BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. FONOFF FRENCH DESK OFFICER HAS INDICATED TO US THAT THE CHIRAC INTERVIEW WAS GREETED WITH "ASTONISHMENT" IN BONN, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THE EXPRESSIONS OF DOUBT ABOUT THE FRG'S COMMITMENT TO EUROPE--THESE HAVE BEEN HEARD FROM PARIS BEFORE--BUT MORE BECAUSE OF THE UNEXPECTEDLY HARSH TONE OF CHIRAC'S REMARKS. THE FONOFF, KNOWING OF CHIRAC'S TIES TO POMPIDOU, CONSIDERS THAT THE INTERVIEW REPRESENTS THE FRENCH LEADER'S VIEWS ON THE FRG AS WELL.

3. THE FONOFF HAS INSTRUCTED ITS PARIS EMBASSY TO MAKE KNOWN TO THE QUAI BONN'S DISMAY AND SURPRISE OVER THE INTERVIEW AND TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION AS TO ITS MEANING. OUR SOURCE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT ANYTHING PARTICULARLY ENLIGHTENING WOULD RESULT FROM THIS DEMARCHE BUT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD PUT THE FRENCH ON NOTICE AS TO THE DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS VIEWING THE AFFAIR.

4. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PUBLICLY TAKING A RESTRAINED POSITION ON THE MATTER. ITS PRESS SPOKESMAN, ALTHOUGH MAKING THE POINT ABOUT FRANCE NOT BEING KNOWN FOR ITS VANGUARD ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION MOVEMENT, HAS STRESSED THAT THE FRG REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE POLICY OF GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AS WELL AS TO THE PROGRAM LAID DOWN BY THE EC SUMMIT OF LAST OCTOBER. OUR FONOFF SOURCE SAID THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS DELIBERATELY TRYING TO MUTE THE PUBLIC DISPUTE, IN THE BELIEF THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED AT THIS POINT FROM ANY PUBLIC POLEMIC BETWEEN
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BONN AND PARIS.

5. IN COMMENTING ON WHAT LAY BEHIND CHIRAC'S STATEMENTS, OUR SOURCE SAID THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY A WIDE SPECTRUM OF POSSIBILITIES, MANY OF THEM INTER-CONNECTED. HE STRESSED THE LIKELY TACTICAL NATURE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH REGARD TO THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD, NOTING THAT THE FRENCH CLEARLY WANT TO PUT THE FRG ON THE DEFENSIVE

OVER THE PROPOSALS IT MAY WISH TO PUT FORWARD THIS FALL UNDER AN EC REVIEW OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY, A PROJECT WHICH THE FRENCH WISH TO GO NOWHERE. THERE IS ALSO THE FEELING THAT CHIRAC IS TRYING TO DEVELOP A PERSONAL POLITICAL BASE AMONG FRANCE'S FARMERS.

6. OUR FONOFF SOURCE NOTED THAT THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT OF THE DISPUTE, WHILE OBVIOUSLY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE FRENCH, DID NOT COVER OTHER DEEP-SEATED FRANCO-GERMAN DIFFERENCES IN FOREIGN POLICY. THERE IS CLEARLY FRENCH RESENTMENT OVER THE FRG'S INCREASING POLITICAL

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

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STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /168 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 11668

PASS AGRICULTUR

AND ECONOMIC POWER, AND ITS INCREASING WILLINGNESS TO USE IT, IN EUROPE; THERE IS OPPOSITION TO THE FRG'S ROLE IN PROMOTING AN INTENSIFIED US-EUROPEAN DIALOGUE; AND THERE IS THE EVER-PRESENT FRENCH DISPLEASURE WITH THE FRG'S IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE.

7. ONE FONOFF SOURCE NOTED IT WAS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHETHER THE FRENCH REALLY BELIEVED THAT IMPROVED FRG-EE TIES WERE LEADING THE FRG TOWARD NEUTRALISM OR WHETHER IT WAS A TACTIC DESIGNED TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON A NEURALGIC POINT WHENEVER THE FRENCH SAW THEIR INTERESTS (IN THIS CASE, AGRICULTURAL) THREATENED BY THE THINKING IN THE FRG. ANOTHER SOURCE TENDED TO CONSIDER THE CHIRAC PIECE ONE MORE EFFORT TO USE RHETORICAL BOMBAST FOR TACTICAL ADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS THE FRG. BECAUSE OF THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE PLOY, OUR SOURCE DID NOT CONSIDER IT LIKELY TO SUCCEED. WHATEVER IS BEHIND THE FRENCH POSITION, ITS PUBLIC EXPRESSION A LA CHIRAC PRODUCES, OUR SOURCE NOTED, AN ATMOSPHERE OF DISTRUST IN RELATIONS WHICH IS SOMETHING NEITHER THE FRG, WESTERN EUROPE NOR THE US SHOULD CONTEMPLATE WITH EQUANIMITY AT THIS POINT.

8. DESPITE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO PLAY IT COOL, THE GERMAN PRESS HAS GIVEN THE LE POINT INTERVIEW AND FRG PRESS SPOKESMAN'S REACTIONS FRONT-PAGE PLAY, AND EDITORIAL WRITERS HAVE HAD A FIELD DAY. THE SPRINGER PRESS HAS TAKEN THE LINE (DIE WELT, AUGUST 15) THAT IT HAD LONG WARNED FRANCE OF THE DANGERS OF BRANDT'S OSTPOLITIK AND IT THEREFORE FOUND THE FRENCH REACTION A "BITTER IRONY" NOW. OTHER EDITORIALS (STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG, FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU, AUGUST 15) SAW THE AGRICULTURAL ISSUE AS REFLECTING DEEPER-SEATED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE FRG IN BASIC FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION. SEVERAL PAPERS ALSO CHARACTERIZED THE LE POINT INTERVIEW AS CRUDE PRESSURE TACTICS IN THE AGRICULTURAL AREA. APART FROM THE SPRINGER PRESS, MOST OF THE NEWSPAPERS REJECTED THE CHARGE OF THE FRG'S LACK OF DEVOTION TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.

9. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR FROM VARIOUS FONOFF CONTACTS THE FRG IS HIGHLY IRRITATED BY THE CHIRAC ARTICLE. WHAT APPEARS TO DISTURB THE GERMANS MOST IS TO BE CONDEMNED AS THE FORCE BLOCKING WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION WHEN THEY FEEL THAT IT IS PRECISELY THE FRENCH WHO ARE

IN THAT ROLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS A
DETERMINATION ON THE FRG PART NOT TO BE CONTINUALLY PUT
ON THE DEFENSIVE BY THE FRENCH LABELING GERMAN POSITIONS
ANTI-EUROPEAN.

10. WHILE WE BELIEVE THE FRG WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO
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KEEP THE DISPUTE FROM BECOMING A PUBLIC POLEMIC, THERE-
FORE, WE ARE OF THE VIEW THAT THE FRENCH MAY HAVE OVER-
PLAYED THEIR HAND. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, MUCH AS IT RECOGNIZES WESTERN
EUROPE'S NEED FOR FRANCE IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS,
IS NOT GOING TO LET FRANCE HAVE IT ALL ITS OWN WAY,
EITHER IN THE AGRICULTURAL AREA OR IN OTHER LARGE POLI-
TICAL QUESTIONS.
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